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SUBJECT: SURINAME: 2007-2008 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR) PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL
CONTROL

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11. Post presents its 2008 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR), Part I, Drugs and Chemical
Control.

Suriname

1I. Summary

Suriname is a transit point for South American cocaine en route to Europe, Africa, and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The Government of Suriname's (GOS) inability to control its borders, inadequate resources, limited training for law enforcement, lack of a law enforcement presence in the interior, and lack of aircraft or patrol boats allow traffickers to move drug shipments via sea, river, and air with little resistance. Unlike 2006, there were no major drug seizures in Suriname. In 2007, the GOS continued its efforts to eliminate major local narcotics organizations. The GOS continued forging cooperation agreements with other countries, regionally and internationally, in order to reduce the import and export of narcotics. Suriname is a party to the 1988 United Nations Drug Convention but has not implemented legislation to bring itself into full conformity with the Convention.

II. Status of Country

Suriname is a transshipment point for cocaine destined primarily for Europe, Africa, and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The GOS is unable to detect the diversion of precursor chemicals for drug production, as it has no legislation controlling precursor chemicals and hence no tracking system to monitor them. The lack of resources; limited law enforcement capabilities; inadequate legislation; drug-related corruption of the police, courts and military; a complicated and time-consuming bureaucracy; and overburdened and under-resourced courts inhibit GOS's ability to identify, apprehend, and prosecute narcotic traffickers. In addition, Suriname's sparsely populated coastal region and isolated jungle interior, together with weak border controls and infrastructure, make narcotics detection and interdiction efforts difficult. Intelligence analysis has indicated a movement of drug traffickers utilizing very remote locations for delivery and securing of narcotics.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2007

Policy Initiatives. Suriname's National Drugs Master Plan (2006-2010) was approved in January 2006. The plan covers both supply and demand reduction and includes calls for new legislation to control precursor chemicals.

The National Anti-Drug Council and its Executive Office coordinate implementation of the plan. In 2007, national support was broadened

by involving NGOs and civil society in the implementation of the plan. The participatory approach was institutionalized by incorporating NGOs and civil society - the Business Association, religious groups, treatment centers - in the National Anti-Drug Council.

Accomplishments. In 2007, the Ministry of Justice and Police and law enforcement institutions in Suriname continued targeting large trafficking rings and working with international partners. Through June 2007, (Post will update statistics in December) the GOS seized 106 kilograms (kg) of cocaine and 70 kg of cannabis. Two hundred thirty-four people were arrested for drug-related offenses. Law enforcement sources attribute this to the GOS' continued focus on targeting major narcotics traffickers -- within the past five years GOS law enforcement has rounded up eight of the ten known major criminal organizations operating in the country. The decrease is also attributed to the establishment of the Airport Narcotics Team as well as anti-narcotics training provided for customs and police officers, both of which have forced narcotics traffickers to seek out new trafficking routes.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Through June, GOS law enforcement agencies arrested 53 drug couriers who ingested cocaine in their stomachs. Many who evaded detection in Suriname were arrested at the airport in Amsterdam, which since 2004 has implemented a 100 percent inspection of all passengers and baggage arriving on all inbound flights from Suriname. Law enforcement officials noted a decrease in the number of drug mules and an increase in the mailing of packages containing narcotics abroad via the postal service. These packages usually contain household items or foodstuff (ginger roots, noodles and bananas) laced with or containing cocaine. In March, a special airport narcotics detection team (JAP team) was set up consisting of officers from the police, military police, customs and the Airport Authority. This team was trained by Dutch law enforcement experts in detecting narcotics and weapons, identifying fraudulent passports and searching aircrafts, and was tasked with decreasing the import and export of narcotics through the Johan Adolf Pengel International airport.

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In May, a judge convicted one of the suspects associated with the 2006 Shaheed "Roger" Khan case and sentenced him to 3 years imprisonment for participation in a criminal organization and sale/transport of 235 kilograms (kg) cocaine. (Shaheed "Roger" Khan, a Guyanese national, was arrested by Surinamese police in 2006 and transported to the United States for trial.) Three men arrested in the August 2006 seizure of 130 kg of cocaine were also sentenced in May 2007 to two, five and seven years imprisonment.

Corruption. As a matter of policy, no senior GOS official, nor the GOS, encourages or facilitates the production, processing, or shipment of narcotic and psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, and does not discourage the investigation or prosecution of such acts. Public corruption is believed to have played some role in reducing the number of seizures that could have taken place, as it is believed that the narcotics traffickers' influence and infiltration in the military and police affected the cooperation of the sparsely populated communities nearby the clandestine airstrips, thereby stymieing law enforcement interdiction efforts. The GOS has demonstrated some willingness to undertake law enforcement and legal measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish public corruption. Through September (Post will update in December), several police officers suspected of narcotics trafficking and membership in criminal organizations were investigated. Public corruption is considered a problem in Suriname and there are continued reports of drug use and drug sales in prisons. Reports of money laundering, drug trafficking, and associated criminal activity involving current and former government and military officials continue to circulate.

Agreements and Treaties. Suriname is party to the 1961 United Nations Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the 1971 U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Suriname is also a party to the 1988 U.N. Drug Convention and has accordingly passed legislation that conforms to a majority of the convention's articles, but it has failed to pass legislation complying with precursor chemical control provisions. In March, Suriname ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The GOS has not ratified the Inter-American Convention on Mutual

Assistance in Criminal Matters or the Optional Protocol thereto. Since 1976, the GOS has been sharing narcotics information with the Netherlands pursuant to a Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement. The two countries intensified their cooperation to fight drug trafficking with agreements between their police forces and their offices of the Attorney General. In August 1999, a comprehensive six-part, bilateral, maritime counter-narcotics enforcement agreement was entered into with the U.S. The U.S.-Netherlands Extradition Treaty of 1904 is applicable to Suriname, but Suriname's Constitution prohibits the extradition of its nationals. In January 2006, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement allowing for direct law enforcement and judicial cooperation between the countries, thereby no longer requiring the process to be first routed through The Hague. Parties met in March and agreed to share intelligence regarding transnational crime and financial crimes. Suriname has also signed bilateral agreements to combat drug trafficking with neighboring countries Brazil, Guyana, Venezuela and Colombia. Suriname is an active member of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States (OAS/CICAD), to which it reports regularly. Suriname has signed agreements with the United States, Netherlands and France that allow for police attaches to work with local police.

Cultivation and Production. Suriname is not a producer of cocaine or opium poppy. While cannabis is cultivated in Suriname, there is little specific data on the amount under cultivation, or evidence that it is exported in significant quantities.

Drug Flow/Transit. Much of the cocaine entering Suriname is delivered by small aircraft, which land on clandestine airstrips that are cut into the dense jungle interior and sparsely populated coastal districts. The border between Suriname and Guyana is an open border and, according to law enforcement officials, traffickers increasingly use this border to traffic cocaine and cannabis to Suriname. The lack of resources, infrastructure, law enforcement personnel, and equipment makes detection and interdiction difficult.

Drugs are transported along interior roads to and from the clandestine airstrips. Drugs are also shipped to seaports via numerous river routes or overland for onward shipment to Caribbean islands, Europe, Africa and the United States. Sea-drops are also used. Drugs exit Suriname via commercial air flights (by drug couriers or concealed in planes) and by commercial sea cargo. European-produced MDMA is transported via commercial airline flights from the Netherlands to Suriname (three to six flights per week, varying seasonally).

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Domestic Programs. In 2007 the Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) Program continued its drug awareness and drug prevention activities with funding from the European Commission. These awareness activities had nationwide coverage. One of the highlights of this decentralized strategy was a widely attended march through Nickerie, the country's most western district, to celebrate the international day against drugs. The program resulted in increased capacity in the prevention of drug use, counseling at early detection of drug use and treatment of drug dependents. In 2007, all six drug treatment centers in the country adopted minimum standards for treatment that were endorsed by the Ministry of Health. The Psychiatric Hospital opened the first detoxification center in the country, expanding the treatment capabilities for drug dependents. With the support of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), a national survey was conducted to assess the magnitude of drug consumption in the country. A total of 4,000 persons from all geographic regions of the country were interviewed on drug consumption, age of first use and perception of risks. The results will be available in early 2008 and will be used to support national policy. In the area of supply reduction, the drug supply reduction network was strengthened, linking key players such as the Narcotics Squad, Office of the Attorney General and Customs in an automated system.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

U.S. Policy Initiatives. The United States provides training and equipment to strengthen the GOS law enforcement and judicial institutions and their capabilities to detect, interdict, and prosecute narcotics trafficking activities. In 2006, Suriname hosted an anti-narcotics conference attended by many regional and international players, including the United States. The "Paramaribo Declaration," which was endorsed in principle by the participants at

the end of the conference, provides a framework to establish an intelligence-sharing network, coordinate and execute sting operations, and tackle money laundering.

Bilateral Cooperation. A high level of cooperation exists between U.S. and GOS law enforcement officials. In 2007, the United States once again provided both training and material support to several elements of the national police to strengthen their counternarcotics capabilities and promote greater bilateral cooperation. In July 2007, the U.S. government funded leadership training for elements of the police force at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador. The DEA intensified its cooperation with Surinamese law enforcement in 2007 after having established an office in Suriname the previous year. In February 2007, DEA trainers provided a two-week Basic International Narcotics Course for police, military police, and customs officials in Suriname.

The Road Ahead. The United States will continue to encourage the GOS to pursue large narcotics traffickers and to dismantle their organizations. The Ministry of Justice and Police has highlighted this goal to the news media, and the Khan arrest bears out its seriousness and commitment. The United States will continue to urge the GOS to continue its efforts to strengthen its focus on port security, specifically seaports, which are seen as the primary conduits for large shipments of narcotics exiting Suriname. The United States will continue to provide equipment, training, and technical support to the GOS to strengthen its counternarcotics efforts.

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